

Message Text

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51

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 MC-02

OMB-01 TRSE-00 L-03 SP-03 PM-07 XMB-07 DRC-01 /091 W

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R 170913Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7411

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

FAA BRUSSELS

USINT DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BIEUT 4433

DEPT PASS COMMERCE FOR COHEN AND EXIMBANK

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, SY

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES REEQUIPMENT AND LINES
OF DEVELOPMENT

REF: DAMASCUS 0390; BEIRUT 4315 AND 3766

SUMMARY: THIS WIRE SUPPLEMENTS INFO CONTAINED IN
DAMASCUS 0390 (REPEATED TO SOME ADDRESSEE POSTS FOR
INFO) CONCERNING CALL BY CHIEF USINT DAMASCUS AND RCAA
ON COMMANDER SYRIAN AIR FORCE IN CONNECTION WITH
POSSIBLE SALE OF US CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT TO SYRIAN ARAB
AIRLINES. END SUMMARY

1. COMMANDER SYRIAN AIR FORCE, MAJOR GENERAL NAJI JAMIL,
WAS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR OF MAJOR GENERAL ASSAD MOUKAYED
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AS CHAIRMAN OF SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES. AIRLINE REPORTS

THROUGH GENERAL JAMIL TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL MOUSTAFA TLASS AND, IN THIS REGARD, JAMIL IS INVOLVED IN FORWARDING AIRLINE'S REEQUIPMENT DECISIONS THROUGH GENERAL TLASS TO SARG SUPREME ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR FINAL APPROVAL.

2. POINT MADE THAT USG ACTIVELY SUPPORTS AND IS VERY MUCH INTERESTED ACQUISITION BY SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES OF NEW US CIVILIAN JET TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. BOEING 707-320C, MCDONNELL DOUGLAS DC-10 AND LOCKHEED L-1011 TRISTAR WERE EACH HIGHLY RELIABLE, ATTRACTIVE AND COST-EFFICIENT AIRCRAFT. CHOICE AMONG THEM RESTED WITH AIRLINE'S OWN INTERNAL STUDIES REGARDING TRAFFICE DENSITY, GROWTH, AND FUTURE ROUTE EXPANSION. TO DISPEL CERTAIN FALSE RUMORS THAT WE UNDERSTAND WERE BEING REPEATED, IT WAS NOTED THAT RECENT CLOSED-LOOP MODIFICATION TO DC-10 CARGO DOORS MADE THESE DOORS COMPLETELY FAIL-SAFE AND AIRCRAFT NOW FULLY MEETS SAFETY REQUIREMENTS.

3. GENERAL JAMIL INDICATED THAT HE IS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN NEW AIRCRAFT SELECTION PROCESS. THIS IS HANDLED BY AIRLINE'S SELECTION COMMITTEE, WHICH INCLUDES SUCH PERSONS AS AIRLINE BOARD CHAIRMAN MOUKAYED, VICE CHAIRMAN ANTAR, DGCA AL-KHANI, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING BAALI, COMMERICAL DIRECTOR AL-SHARAA AS WELL AS ACTING TECHNICAL DIRECTOR ABDULLAH SADOUDI. HE EXPRESSED THE OPINION HOWEVER THAT PEHAPS THE BOEING 707-320C WAS THE RIGHT CHOICE, BASED ON PROVEN LONG TERM RECORD OF ACCEPTANCE, SAFETY, AND RELIABILITY.

4. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION BY GENERAL JAMIL ON AIRBUS INDUSTRIE -300B4, IT WAS STATED THAT THIS AIRCRAFT IS EFFECTIVE, BUT ONLY ON SPECIALIZED SHORT OR MEDIUM LENGHT ROUTES. THE A-300B4 WOULD SUFFER SERIOUS PAYLOAD PENALTIES ON MANY OF SYRIAN ARAB'S PLANNED SECTORS, PARTICULARLY NEW DELHI-DAMASCUS AND DAMASCUS-LONDON. THIS AIRCRAFT WOULD ALSO EXCLUDE SYRIAN ARAB FROM FAR EAST AND NORTH ATLANTIC OPERATIONS.

5. GENERAL JAMIL GRATIFIED BY USG INTEREST IN ACQUISITION
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BY SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES OF US CIVILIAN TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. HE STATED HE WOULD PASS THIS INFORMATION ON TO GENERAL TLASS AND GENERAL MOUKAYED. HE FURTHER INDICATED HE WAS PREPARED TO FACILITATE SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS WITH KEY OFFICIALS OF THE AIRLINE. (AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING GENERAL MOUKAYED HAS NOT YET RETURNED FROM MOSCOW AND DGCA AL-KHANI WAS STILL CONVALESCING FROM SURGERY.) GODLEY

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